

REMARKS

The claims withdrawn from consideration have been canceled. Claim 1 has been amended in the interest of clarification and to additionally recite a fuel gas discharge line and a discharge valve as exemplified in applicants' disclosure by the hydrogen discharge electromagnetic valve 27a provided in discharge line 203, 204. See Fig. 1 and paragraph [0073]. A new claim 22 has been added to recite the pump between the fuel chamber and the discharge valve, is also shown (25) in Fig. 1 and described in paragraph [0073].

The fuel gas discharge line connected to the fuel chamber allows oxygen (air) remaining in the fuel chamber 30 at the time of startup to be easily discharged. Further, by provision of a pump, it becomes possible to establish a negative pressure inside the fuel chamber 30 which more reliably ensures the complete discharge of oxygen from the fuel chamber.

The rejection of claim 1 (? claims 1-6) for anticipation over Yang is respectfully traversed for several reasons.

Firstly, Yang neither discloses nor suggests anything equivalent to the gas discharge line now recited by claim 1. Further, Yang neither discloses nor suggests a pump in the fuel gas discharge line as recited by newly added claim 22.

Secondly, Yang neither discloses nor suggests "pressure regulating means" for regulating the pressure of the flow of fuel gas into the fuel cell at one pressure upon startup and at a different pressure for later, normal operation in power generation. As the examiner correctly notes at page 3 of the office action, in paragraphs [0024] and

[0026] Yang teaches that the flow of the fuel gas (hydrogen) to the anode is alternated between (1) flow at a rate providing a “higher than the required stoichiometric amount” and (2) no flow at all. No flow is not flow at any pressure.

Thirdly, the examiner has not correlated any teaching of Yang with one or more embodiments of “pressure regulating means” disclosed in applicants’ specification, much less explain why any structure of Yang should be considered an equivalent therof. Accordingly, the examiner continues to misconstrue applicants’ means-plus-function” claim language.

Claim 2

Neither of position sensors 106 and 108 of Yang can properly be considered “a sensor for detecting the concentration of the fuel gas in the fuel chamber. Position sensors are not gas sensors. Further, even if 106 and 108 did function to detect concentration of some gas they could not detect “the concentration of the of the fuel gas in the fuel chamber” because they are remote from the fuel chamber with intervening valving.

Claim 3

The examiner reads claim 3 on valves 62 and 64 of Yang. However, valves 62 and 64 of Yang are clearly in series, not in parallel as required by claim 3. Further 62 is an ON/OFF switch and placing it in parallel with 64 would allow gas to bypass pressure regulation by valve 64, contrary to the teaching of Yang.

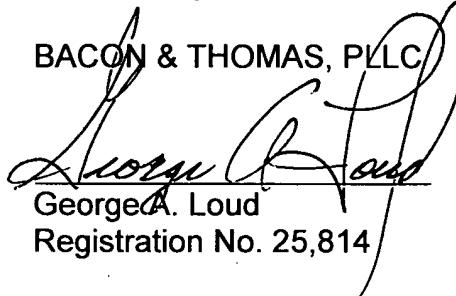
Claim 22

As noted above, Yang neither discloses nor suggests a pump in a discharge line from the fuel cell fuel chamber.

Reconsideration of the rejection of record is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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